LETTER
from the Board

With this January/February issue we get to celebrate the New Year twice—once on January 1, and again on February 16, the Lunar New Year celebrated throughout much of Asia—including Taiwan, where the first BSDTW conference was held this past November. I recommend Brooks Davis's excellent report in this issue, and I'd also like to thank the organizers of BSDTW for the amazing job they did in developing that conference from concept to the opening talk in less than a year.

Organizing a conference requires a staggering amount of work. Pick dates that don't overlap with too many competing events, get a venue at a reasonable price, figure out how to provide food for 100 to 200 hungry engineers, and build a program committee—all are just parts of the process. And, oh yes, there is the funding. Open-source code may be free as in beer, but let me tell you the beer you drink at a conference is not free. More than half the work of conference organizing is finding companies and attendees to pay for it.

BSDTW was the brainchild of some FreeBSD developers in Taiwan, Li-Wen Hsu, Ruey-Cherng Yu, and Ray Chen, who approached me over tea in December 2016 after a talk I'd given at National Taiwan University. The tea was just an excuse to sit down and try to convince me and, by proxy, the FreeBSD Foundation to support a conference in Taiwan. It didn't take much convincing since I knew they'd be doing a lot of the work and all I had to do was persuade the Foundation Board to put in some seed money. As it happens, I wound up running the Program Committee, but it was the folks in Taiwan who turned the idea into butts in seats by November 2017. BSDTW was perhaps the most successful first-time conference ever held by the BSDs. When it was time for that first keynote talk, all the seats in the venue had been sold out, and they were selling standing room tickets. The conference went off without a hitch—it was an amazing performance—and I hope they'll do it again in 2018.

Now, let's turn to our slate of articles in this issue, which includes two excellent pieces about storage. Alexander Motin's article describes how multipathing works to improve the reliability and performance of the storage subsystems in FreeBSD, and Ken Merry writes about tape systems, which, he asserts, are not dead. Farhan Kahn walks us through just what happens when we use the ifconfig(8) command, which is what controls all network devices on FreeBSD. Tracing ifconfig(8) allows Farhan to show us many interacting pieces of the networking code, and since his main focus is wireless devices, there is quite a maze of twisty little passages to follow.

Columns include Brooks Davis's previously mentioned BSDTW report, a storage-related book review by Matt Joras, an svn Update installment by Steven Kreuzer, and Events Calendar from Dru Lavigne. Speaking of events, the next BSD-related conference is AsiaBSD, March 8–11, 2018, in Tokyo, Japan, and I look forward to seeing everyone there!

George Neville-Neil
President of the *FreeBSD Foundation* Board of Directors